and Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMST) Treaty has not resulted in any appreciable economic cooperation;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to smoothen the process to facilitate an upswing in the bilateral trade with these countries as well?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Framework Agreement on Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was signed in February, 2004. The Framework Agreement includes provision for negotiation of FTA on goods amongst the member countries, viz. Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. As per the schedule given in the Agreement, the tariff liberalisation programme shall commence on 1st July, 2006.

(c) Member countries of BIMSTEC have constituted the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) to carry forward the programme, as stipulated in the Framework Agreement and the TNC is undertaking the negotiations as per schedule.

Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana

959. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what are the salient features of Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana;

(b) since when this is being implemented; and

(c) the details of achievements of this scheme so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana has been notified with an objective to promote export of fruits, vegetables, flowers, minor forest produce, dairy, poultry and their value added products by incentivising export of such products. The exporters of such products are entitled for duty credit scrip equivalent to 5% of FOB value of exports for each licensing year commencing from 1st April, 2004. However, dairy, poultry and their value added products shall qualify for benefits in respect of exports made on or after 1st April, 2005. The scrip and the items imported against it are freely transferable. The details

of the scheme are given in the Book titled "Foreign Trade Policy, 2004-09 updated as on 31.3.2005". The scheme is in operation for exports effected in 2004-05, onwards.

(c) Currently, applications are being received for awarding benefits under Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana and the last date for exports of 2004-05, is 31st December, 2005.

MFN status in Indo-Pak trade

960. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of Pak President to New Delhi he pointed out that the tariff barriers in India were not in tandem with the Most Favoured Nation status granted by India in respect of Pak-goods;

(b) whether it is a fact that most of the to-and-fro trade with Pakistan is made through Dubai; if so, the extent of the two way trade done with Pakistan through Dubai and other channels during 2004-05 and 2005-06 so far; and

(c) the steps since taken to translate the MFN status in Indo-Pak trade in absolute terms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) During his meeting with Prime Minister on 17th July, 2005 in New Delhi, President Musharraf said that although India had given MFN status to Pakistan its exports to India faced difficulty due to non-tariff and para-tariff barriers.

(b) Indian imports into Pakistan are governed by a positive list of items specified by the Government of Pakistan. The bilateral trade between India and Pakistan is taking place directly. During 2004-05 goods valued at Rs. 2271 crores were exported to Pakistan and goods valued at Rs. 428 crores were imported from Pakistan. During April-May, 2005 (2005-2006) goods valued at Rs. 365 crores were exported to Pakistan and goods valued at Rs. 79 crores were imported from Pakistan. No data is available regarding bilateral trade between India and Pakistan through third countries.

(c) During the bilateral discussion with Pakistan, under the framework of Composite Dialogue, the Joint Study Group (JSG) at the level of Commerce Secretaries of both countries hold their discussions on issues